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AUTHOR Hyland, Timothy
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine ways in which junior high school staff might be reoriented to better function within new objectives, methods, and materials. It is hypothesized that reexamined objectives have indicated a need for greater emphasis in affective-social psychological areas. Staff development within such a context consists of teacher selection, teacher assignment, teacher development, and teacher release. Teachers hired should possess characteristics consonant with the determined goal. Measuring these characteristics can be done through inventories and interview techniques. Teacher assignment is very important since teachers are almost always more likely to maintain a better, less hostile atmosphere in the calssroom if they are content in their position. Another element of this phase can be labelled psychological education, i.e., the use of counselors in a classroom role. Teacher development involves self-help (in the form of classes, clinics, or workshops) and supervision (an important element frequently overlooked). The final phase is teacher release. Many administrators have been reluctant to remove ineffective staff members--a policy which has been largely responsible for the charge that schools are places where teachers work, rather than places where children learn. (PB)

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Affective Education in the Junior High Schools: A Program for Staff Reorientation

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Timothy Hyland
Administrative Assistant
Teacher Education Services
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907
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The improvement and upgrading of the instructional program of any school requires a broad spectrum effort on many fronts. This would include a re-examination and, if need be, re-definition of the objectives of the institution in the light of its function in society, a consideration of the many alternative ways to achieve these objectives, and the development of instructional programs which incorporate the chosen alternatives. The staff necessarily must also be reoriented to better function within these new objectives, methods and materials. It is the purpose of this paper to examine the ways in which this reorientation might be accomplished.

Since there are many different directions in which these newly formulated objectives might lead and since an examination of the reorientation of junior high school personnel, in the abstract, would require unnecessary mental

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gymnastics, for the purpose of this paper we shall assume one particular thrust within these objectives. For our purposes we shall hypothesize that the re-examined objectives of the junior high school have indicated a need for greater emphasis in the affective-social-psychological areas. I might add, parenthetically, that this conclusion is not an unlikely one considering the present cognitive orientation in many of today's junior high schools. This, then, is our goal- to reorient and, as needed, reconstruct the staff so as to bring about a renewed emphasis upon the role of the junior high school as a psycho-social environment in which transescents might not only grow in cognitive skills but also in self-respect and self-knowledge, finally producing a student who has both mastered basic learning skills and also possesses a healthy self-concept.

As indicated earlier an objective of such a large scope would require efforts on many fronts. Renewed emphasis on the affective objectives of the junior high school likely would include curricular changes, organizational alterations, community activities and perhaps even a change in the physical facilities. However, these various elements are beyond the scope of this paper which will focus on the staff development within such a context. This staff development will consist of four phases; teacher selection,

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teacher assignment, teacher development, and teacher release.[1]

If we have stated that we, as a faculty, desire renewed efforts in the affective area it is essential that new staff who are hired should, to whatever extent possible, be appraised of this school objective and some attempt made to determine whether or not the candidate would be appropriate in the light of this goal. Simply stating that one would prefer teachers who possess characteristics consonant with our school goal is, of course, much easier than measuring such characteristics. The nature of these characteristics naturally makes their measurement rather difficult, but not impossible.

If the desirability of the characteristic of "warmth" is accepted, for example, there are several paper and pencil inventories which measure such a characteristic and correlate fairly closely to one another on this scale. These inventories are the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory, the California Scale and the Teacher Characteristics Schedule. Each of these instruments also identify characteristics which show a positive correlation with favorable assessments of the teacher by both students and objective observers, and with the

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[1]Peter Coleman, "The Improvement of Aggregate Teaching Effectiveness in a School District", Educational Administration Quarterly 9 (Autumn, 1973): passim.

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cognitive achievement of students.[2]

In addition to such inventory approaches there are interview techniques designed to assist the administrator in determining which candidate possesses the necessary affective instructional skills. DeWitt has outlined five interview techniques which are designed "to determine the applicant's degree of receptiveness towards affective instructional skills." Among the strategies suggested are having the applicant share with the interviewer how he would spend money: "If given $300,000 to improve elementary education, how would you spend it?" to a series of autobiographical questions which probe many of the applicant's thoughts concerning the affective realm of education. Some questions include "What kind of children do you admire most? Which kind do you dislike most?" and "Can you share anything you are proud of?"[3]

The second phase, teacher assignment, concerns the problem of matching the teacher to the appropriate niche within the organizational arrangement. Not only would we be concerned with the teacher's cognitive skills, but also whether or not he was personally content with the assignment.

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[2] Ibid., p.32.

[3] Gerald DeWitt, "How to Identify Humanistic Teachers", The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals 57 (December, 1973): pp. 21, 23.

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much of this contentment would stem from efforts by the administration to see to it that each staff member was placed as nearly as possible where he would function most effectively. Regardless of the reasons for this contentment, it is nearly an educational truism that a teacher who is happy with his teaching assignment will likely maintain a better, less hostile atmosphere in the classroom than one who is not happy with his assignment.

Another element of this phase of teacher assignment, which also reflects a possible curricular adaptation might be the use of counselors in a classroom role. Counselors have, themselves, urged an entry into the classroom in an attempt to break out of the narrow concept of counseling as it is held today. Such a movement, labelled psychological education, has been referred to as "one of the most important roles of the counselor in the next five years" by the editors of the prestigious Personnel and Guidance Journal.[4] It is not the purpose of this paper to examine psychological education as a curriculum adaptation, but suffice it to say that psychological education is essentially concerned with personal growth for all

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[4]Allen E. Ivey and Alfred S. Alschuler, "Psychological Education Is ...," The Personnel and Guidance Journal 51 (May, 1973): p.589.

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students through the primary media of the group process.[5]

The third phase, teacher development, would include several elements. Certainly many teachers have shown a willingness towards self-help when they have become aware of some professional deficiency; math teachers have studied the new math, social studies teachers attended workshops in the inquiry method, coaches attend clinics to keep abreast of new developments in their area of expertise. This self-help might include formal course work, workshops or simply private, professional reading in the area of guidance.

Since it falls outside the sphere of the school day proper only a few incentives towards self-help techniques can be effected by the administrator. Certainly recognition of such additional study at the appropriate moments in a faculty meeting or in-service workshop would serve as encouragement to the rest of the faculty. Keeping the faculty aware of various workshops and experiences which are related to this school goal would also assist self-help. Maintaining a professional library which would keep abreast of the best professional writings in the area of student self-concept and related areas would also be a significant aid. Some districts have even encouraged the enrollment in formal

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[5]Roger F. Aubrey, "Organizational Victimization of School Counselors", The School Counselor 20 (May, 1973): p.353.

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graduate classes by reimbursing the teacher for part or even all of the tuition for such courses. A blend of self-help and in-service is occurring in some school systems where a university course is taught in the school building for members of the staff who are interested.

In-service programs should also form an element in the teacher development phase. I have already suggested that an in-service self-examination conducted to re-examine the goals of the junior high school was responsible for the renewed efforts in the area of affective education. A continuing program of in-service training workshops should be developed, with staff input at each step, to further implement and sustain the gains made by the staff. In addition to the traditional "visiting expert" approach to in-service, where so frequently the staff hears a canned talk by a consultant, some attempt should be made to utilize the existing guidance staff in the school or the system. In this way not only would the staff become exposed to the professional workings of the guidance department, but also the guidance staff would have the opportunity to establish itself as a resource area for teachers who need assistance in the area of affective education.

Another element of teacher development, and one which I believe is frequently overlooked, is supervision. Both the

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style and emphasis of the school's supervisory program can have a great impact on the success of the school's efforts towards its goal. Two styles which lend themselves to the goal of a heightened student self-concept are interaction analysis[6] and clinical supervision.[7]

One of the fundamental concepts implicit in interaction analysis is the notion that learning best takes place when the socio-emotional climate of the classroom is not threatening or menacing. Interaction analysis is designed to measure this classroom climate. Some emphasis is placed upon indirect teacher behavior where the ideas and opinions of students are solicited and where their participation is encouraged and their feelings accepted. This emphasis in supervision is clearly consistent with the larger staff objective.

Clinical supervision, best exemplified by Goldhammer, examines among others the concept of incidental learnings, and tries to place emphasis upon the existence and results of incidental learnings as they appear in the classroom. Incidental learnings, according to Goldhammer, refer

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[6]Edmund J. Amidon and John B. Hough, Interaction Analysis: Theory, Research and Application (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1967), passim.

[7]Robert Goldhammer, Clinical Supervision: Special Methods for the Supervision of Teachers (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), passim.

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to the "great spectrum of things that the teacher did not intend them (students) to learn, generally without the teacher's awareness that they have been learned, and as a direct result of the teacher's behavior."[8] Though such learnings can support intended learning frequently it tends to be dysfunctional. Clinical supervision attempts first to discern the presence of these incidental learnings, then to determine their effect in the instructional program and finally to modify the teacher's behavior as needed in the light of these discoveries.

The final phase of the program is teacher release. Too frequently have administrators been loathe to release a teacher who patently is doing a poor job. Given the opportunity to improve their effectiveness through self-help, in-service programs and supervision, those who continue to demonstrate their relative lack of efficiency in the classroom should be released. This reluctance to remove ineffective staff members has been, in large part, responsible for the charge that schools are places where teachers work, rather than places where children learn. In this era of due process and professional negotiations agreements we need not worry that good teachers would suddenly fall to the whim of an arbitrary administrator. There would appear to

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[8] Ibid., p. 12.

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be ample safeguards to prevent such an occurrence. Until personnel decisions are consistently made with the benefit of the students given greatest priority, poor teachers will continue to be found in our schools and programs will tend to lag behind.

This four phase plan for the improvement of the student's self-concept through a reorientation of the staff is, as has been pointed out earlier, only one element in a multi-faceted approach to the problem. However, this larger approach with various curricular components, emphasis on community public relations and other similar elements will be doomed from the beginning if there is not a commitment by the staff who will be responsible for actively fostering such a program in the classroom setting.

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